Dear Dr. Britton.

I wish to call your attention, either in a personal way or in the Bulletin, if preferred, to a name coined by you on the 223d page of this year's Bulletin; —

"*Conioselinum bipinnatum* (Walter, Fl. Car. under *Apium*), Britton. *Selinum Canadense*, Michx, ~~Fl.~~ 1803.

I want to liberate my mind by insisting that the process adopted violates the rules of nomenclature by ~~in~~ giving ~~producing~~ a superfluous name to a plant, and also, that, in all reasonable probability your name is an incorrect one.

Take the second point first. On glancing at the Flora of North America by Torrey & Gray, 1.869, where the name *Conioselinum Canadense* legitimately came in, you will notice that the name Apium bipinnatum, Walt. is not cited as a synonym; also that the synonymous name of *Cnidium Canadense* Spreng. is cited with "excl. syn." This *Apium bipinnatum*, Walt., you ~~would at~~ might gather was one referred to. Sufficient reason for the exclusion by Dr. Torrey might have been that Michaux's plant is a cold northern one, which nobody would expect in or near Walter's ground — the

low and low middle part of Carolina. Besides the preface of that Flora states that Walter's herbarium had meanwhile been inspected by Dr. Torrey's colleague, who may now add that the ~~Prinum~~ lipsinatum is not there. So that the name you adopt rests wholly upon a mere guess of Sprengel's, copied by DeCandolle dropped on good ground by Torrey, but inadvertently reproduced in Watson's Index, copying DeCandolle, I suppose you would not contend that a wholly unauthenticated and dubious (I might say doubtless mistaken) name, under a wrong genus, should supersede by its specific half, a well authenticated and legitimate name. And I am sure that you will not take it amiss when I say that very ~~ol~~ long experience has made it clear to me that this business of determining rightful names is ~~[illegible]~~ not so simple and mechanical as to younger botanists it seems to be, but is very full of pit=falls. I ~~trust~~ it is ~~no~~ personal feeling which suggests the advice that it is better to leave such rectifications for monographs and comprehensive works, or at least to make quite sure of the ground. ~~For [illegible], in the~~ We look to you and to such as yourself, placed at

well-furnished botanical centers, to do your share of conscientious work and to support right doctrines.

So I may proceed to say that, upon the recognized principles since the adoption of the Candollean code your name of <u>Conioselinum bipinnatum</u>, even if founded in fact, would be inadmissible and superfluous. By a corollary of the rule that priority of publication fixes the name, taken along with the fact a plant-name is of two parts, generic and specific, it follows that in any case, <u>Conioselinum Canadense</u> is the prior name for those who hold to the genus <u>Conioselinum</u>. I have laid down what I take to be the correct view as to this, in my Structural Botany, paragr. 754, where it is supported by the high authority of Bentham. I believe it is more and more acceded to by the most competent judges. There are those who make transpositions of divorced halves of plants name, and who, also make the law of priority mechanically override other equally valid laws, without regard to sense. To such the old law, maxim of the elder DeCandolle was applied: <u>summum jus, summa injuria</u>. If you

like to adopt their ideas, you have at hand a still older, the very oldest name, namely <u>Conioselinum Chinense</u>, for I can certify that, the [illegible] is a Conioselinum with 's <u>Athamanta Chinensis</u> of Linnaeus.

Very truly yours

Asa Gray